



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Declaration

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Decline in independent contractors

The number of people working as independent contractors in Australia decreased over the last two years, according to a report released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

In November 2012, almost 980,000 employed persons were independent contractors in their main job. There were 47,000 fewer independent contractors than in November 2011 which was after a decline of 83,600 persons between 2011 and 2010.

ABS Director of Labour Force, Cassandra Gligora said "the decrease was mostly driven by a decline in the number of male independent contractors, down from 824,400 in 2010 to 716,500 in 2012.

The Forms of Employment Survey found that independent contractors were more likely to have a say in their start and finish times than employees, but they were more likely to work longer hours and on weekends.

"Most (83 per cent) independent contractors had a say on their start and finish times compared to only 39 per cent of employees, however one in nine (11 per cent) independent contractors usually worked seven days a week, compared with just 4 per cent of employees."

"They were more likely than employees to work on both weekdays and weekends (42 per cent compared with 30 per cent)," Ms Gligora said.

"Independent contractors were more likely to work longer hours than employees. Almost a quarter of independent contractors (24 per cent) reported that they worked 49 or more hours a week, compared to 12 per cent of employees," she said.

The industries with the highest proportion of independent contractors were Construction (29 per cent) and Administrative and support services (21 per cent).

Further details can be found in Forms of Employment, Australia, November 2012 (cat. no. 6359.0).

Media note:

- Please ensure when reporting on ABS data that you attribute the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or the ABS) as the source.
- Independent contractors are defined as employed people who operate their own business and who are contracted to perform services for others under a commercial contract, rather than as an employee under an employment contract. Independent contractors provide a labour service directly to a client, rather than generating their income from managing their

staff or from selling goods or services.

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